

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for displaying a TV program to a viewer, comprising:
 - allowing the viewer to select one of a plurality of available TV programs for viewing;
 - receiving a plurality of video segments constituting the selected TV program;
 - receiving information describing each received video segment; and
 - controlling the display of one or more of the received video segments in accordance with the segment information and with previously determined viewing preferences of the viewer.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the information comprises:
 - receiving the information together with each respective video segment.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the information received comprises any one or more of video segment content, length, rating, title, subject, category, or target audience characteristics.
4. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein controlling the display comprises:
 - selecting a subset of the received segments in accordance with the segment information and with previously determined viewing preferences of the viewer; and
 - displaying the selected segments.
5. The method of claim 4, comprising:

receiving an alternative video segment for replacing a specific received video segment, the specific segment not in the subset of selected segments; and wherein selecting the subset comprises

selecting the alternative video segment.

6. The method of claim 4, comprising:

storing the received segments not in the subset of selected segment for subsequent viewing.

7. The method of claim 6, comprising:

receiving a command from the viewer to display the stored received segments; and

displaying the stored received segments.

8. The method of claim 4, comprising:

notifying the viewer that a subset of the received segments are displayed. ✓

9. The method of claim 8, comprising:

receiving a command from the viewer to display all received segments; and wherein selecting the subset comprises selecting all received segments.

10. A method for displaying an interactive TV program to a viewer, comprising:

receiving a plurality of video segments comprising the TV program;

displaying the received video segments sequentially;

allowing the viewer to select a received video segment to interact therewith; and

storing subsequently received video segments while the viewer is interacting with the selected video segment.

11. The method of claim 10, comprising:

displaying the stored video segments following the viewer interacting with the selected video segment.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein displaying the stored video segments comprises:

automatically displaying the stored video segments immediately following the viewer interacting with the selected video segment.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein receiving the video segments comprises:

receiving the plurality of linear video segments at a set-top box connected to a display of the viewer.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein storing the video segments comprises:

storing the subsequently received video segments at the set-top box.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein the video segments are selected from the group of video segments comprising advertising, entertainment, news, weather, financial, sports, educational, and shopping programming.

16. A method for delivering customized video programming to each of a plurality of individual viewers, comprising:

processing information indicative of preferences of each of the plurality of viewers to develop a viewer characteristics information profile for each of the viewers;

analyzing viewing selections made by an individual viewer;

selecting the viewer profile most indicative of the viewing selections; and

prompting the individual viewer to confirm that the selected profile corresponds to the individual viewer.

17. The method of claim 16, comprising:

receiving confirmation from the individual viewer that the selected profile corresponds to the individual viewer; and

allowing the individual viewer to prevent the rest of the plurality of viewers from accessing the profile of the individual viewer.

18. The method of claim 16, comprising:

receiving confirmation from the individual viewer that the selected profile corresponds to the individual viewer; and

allowing the individual viewer to edit the information in the profile of the individual viewer.

19. The method of claim 17, comprising:

allowing the individual viewer to edit the information in the profile of the individual viewer.

20. A method for displaying a TV program to a viewer, comprising:

processing information indicative of preferences of the viewer to develop a viewer characteristics information profile for the viewer;

presenting the viewer with a list of TV programs available for viewing, the programs selected in accordance with the viewer profile;

receiving input from the viewer requesting different selections; and

presenting the viewer with a list of alternative TV programs available for viewing, the alternative programs selected in accordance with an alternative profile.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the alternative profile includes alternative viewer characteristics information for the viewer.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the alternative profile includes viewer characteristics information for a second viewer.

23. The method of claim 20, wherein the alternative profile includes generic viewer characteristics information, the generic information pre-selected in accordance with one or more viewer demographic traits.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the generic information is pre-selected in accordance with any one or more of available TV program content, rating, schedule, or duration.

25. The method of claim 20, comprising:
replacing the viewer profile with the alternative profile.

26. The method of claim 25, comprising:
allowing the viewer to edit the alternative profile.

27. The method of claim 20, comprising:
randomly selecting the alternative profile from a plurality of available alternative profiles.

28. A method for presenting available TV programs to a viewer, comprising:

processing information indicative of preferences of the viewer to develop a viewer characteristics information profile for the viewer;

selecting a predetermined number of TV programs from a plurality of TV programs available for viewing, the programs selected in accordance with the viewer profile; and

presenting the viewer with a list of the selected programs, the list arranged in accordance with the viewer profile.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein selecting the programs comprises:

processing information indicative of characteristics of the selected programs; and presenting the list comprises

presenting the viewer with a list of the selected programs, the list arranged in accordance with the viewer profile and the characteristics of the selected programs.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein the list is sorted in accordance with the degree of correspondence between the characteristics of each selected program and the viewer profile.

31. The method of claim 28, wherein presenting the list comprises:

presenting the viewer with a list of the selected programs, the list including the characteristics of the selected programs.